

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-1502

COMMITTEES:
AGRICULTURE

APPROPRIATIONS

HEALTH, EDUCATION,
LABOR, AND PENSIONS

SMALL BUSINESS

May 2, 2011

Postmaster General Patrick Donahoe
United States Postal Service
475 L'Enfant Plaza, SW
Washington, DC 20260-2600

Dear Postmaster General Donahoe:

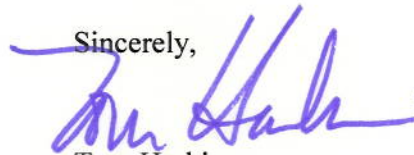
I write in opposition to the proposed regulations posted in the Federal Register on March 31, 2011. If enacted, the regulations will give the United States Postal Service (USPS) the right to convert post offices into stations or branches of larger post offices at USPS's discretion. Once converted, the USPS would then be able to close rural post offices without any consultation with local citizens or concern about the impact on a rural community.

It appears that the proposed regulations are designed specifically to circumvent current laws that ensure local voices are heard. As you know, today communities have the legal right to appeal the closure of their post office but they do not have a right to appeal the closure of a station or branch. Converting rural post offices into stations or branch will, therefore, severely diminish local communities' input.

I am also concerned about permitting an employee other than a postmaster to manage a facility. Currently, the Postmasters Equity Act states that a "postmaster" must manage a post office. This ensures that USPS facilities are managed by individuals who have adequate training and experience and that the mail is handled in a safe, secure and efficient manner. I do not believe that the proposed change is in the best interest of the USPS or its customers.

Postal service is essential to the vitality of communities and local businesses. It is critical that easy, effective communication be maintained throughout the United States. I recognize that our current postal service is in need of reform but I am deeply troubled that the proposed regulations will strip rural communities of their right to be heard, ignore the impact of decisions on our local communities, and do nothing to ensure the efficient delivery of the mail. I urge you to withdraw these proposed regulations.

Sincerely,



Tom Harkin
United States Senator